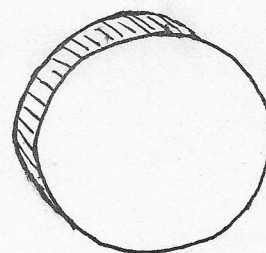
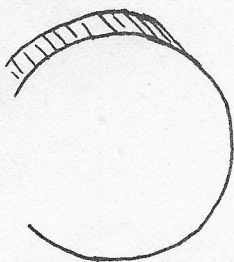


RADIO IN DEPTH

MARCH, 1975

ISSUE 9



RADIO IN DEPTH !

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PUBLISHED EVERY MONTH

\$1.25 per Issue

\$12.50 per Year

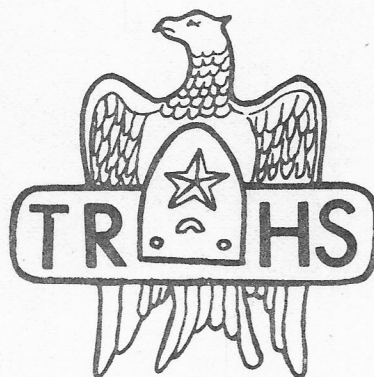
P.O. Box 3634

Bryan, Texas 77801

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RADIO IN DEPTH is the official publication of the Texas Radio Historical Society !



THE LITERARY "WUNDERKIND" OF RADIO

by Marion David Wedin

"The audience wants plays which deal with human emotions and human conflicts in a manner as mature as the playwright's own maturity permits." Arch Oboler

During the late '30's and early '40's—in the majestic Radio City studios of NBC—would walk a strange being. It was human like—standing bolt upright on two feet. It was not tall (only 5-feet 3-inches high), but it was truly one of the eight wonders of RADIO !!! As if defying gravity the being would spring to the top of a table. Turning it would drop to one knee. Where the ears should be were black mounds and where the eyes should be were large tinted glass like round objects. With a wave of its arms the room would be filled with music. Another wave and images of the mind would spring into action. Was this a super intelligence from another world far beyond the stars? Or could it be the quick witted Puck sprung full grown from the pages of A Midsummer Night's Dream?

No. It was not Puck, nor a being from another world. It was Arch Oboler. "Who?" you might ask—if you are that uninformed about RADIO's history. Greta Garbo, when asked to appear on a government program during World War II that Arch Oboler was to direct, asked, "And who is Arch Oboler?" But everyone Ms. Garbo knew nothing about RADIO.

Or maybe you are one of those good people who connect Arch Oboler with LIGHTS OUT and nothing else. The truth is that Arch Oboler brought to RADIO the "Stream-of-consciousness" form of narration. "By 'stream-of-consciousness' is meant dramatically portraying the actual thoughts in the mind of a person, with the instantaneous shift of scene and change of voice as would actually occur in the mind of the individual. RADIO drama has borrowed from many other literary forms, but the 'stream-of-consciousness' form of narration is certainly RADIO's own, because only the RADIO medium permits the lightning shift of scene from past to present to future, from air to earth to water."

Arch Oboler also introduced the "monodramalogue"—dramatic monologue against a background of unusual sound effects. But the most important contribution Arch Oboler made to RADIO was those hundreds of RADIO-plays he wrote—those many human problems he made so clear and understandable.

Contrary to rumor, Arch Oboler was born. In fact, he was born in the windy city of Chicago in December of 1909. He was the son of Leo and Clara Oboler and in his youth he loved the study of nature and its science. The boy naturalist showed another skill when, at the age of ten, he turned a visit to the zoo into a story and sold it.

At the University of Chicago Arch majored in electrical engineering, but he never let his studies effect his writing. While still in college Arch wrote a fantasy called "Futuristic". NBC was so impressed with "Futuristic" that they not only bought it, but also used it to salute the opening of Radio City.

"Futuristic" was written in 1933, but Arch's high hopes caused him to leave school only to find that RADIO-play writing was a good way to lose weight for a newcomer. For the next few months Arch worked at odd jobs while writing one script after another. He even became a light-weight prizefighter to keep bread on the table.

Arch Oboler's first play of 1934 was "McCafferty and Moe", a series that never sold. His second was "Avenue A", ten scripts he wrote with Bob Nolan. But on June 2, 1934 Arch Oboler's play, "Tourist Camp", was broadcasted on a leading series, FIRST NIGHTER. Arch Oboler was on his way, but he still had a few lean months to go.

After a summer of fighting, Arch became one of the writers of GRAND HOTEL. His first GRAND HOTEL play was "She Just Couldn't Say Yes" (September 30, 1934). Then came "Boy Wanted" (October 14, 1934); "Kick Off at Two" (November 4, 1934); "Little Ireland" (December 9, 1934); and "You, My Wife" (December 23, 1934).

1935 brought even more GRAND HOTEL plays by Arch Oboler: "The Last Survivor" (March 14, 1935); "The Chinese Gong" (May 5, 1935); "Lady Doctor" (June 2, 1935); "The Colonel's Lady" (June 9, 1935); "Millionaires Only" (June 16, 1935). Arch also wrote a FIRST NIGHTER show, "Boy O'mine" (July 19, 1935). In September Arch started writing THEATRE COMIQUE [the first show was "The Busy Bachelors"].

It was during 1935 that Arch started writing sketches for movie and RADIO stars. These sketches were played by variety show, who in those days liked to include ten to fifteen minutes of drama in every show. The list of people Arch wrote for is too long to include, but a few of the names were: Don Ameche, Henry Fonda, Joan Crawford, Walter Huston, and Edward G. Robinson.

1936 brought the signing of an anti-Comintern pact by Germany, Japan, and Italy. It also was a good year for the young Arch Oboler. When Arch took over the writing of LIGHTS OUT he marked it with a sharp, tense dialogue and driving pace. But of more importance were the stories that increased in their degree of horror with each new story he wrote. Of all the over 400 RADIO-plays Arch wrote before 1940, his LIGHTS OUT plays are the ones everyone seemed to remember till their death.

It was in 1936 that Arch married the University of Chicago student, Eleanor Helfand. But marrying a man who was all wrapped up in finding new ways to give nightmares was not all smiles. To say the least, their first year of marriage was high adventure. Their honeymoon was a grand tour of all the hunted houses in New England. Then Arch wrote "Rich Kid" for the RUDY VALLEE HOUR and after Freddie Bartholomew had played the part for the third time by popular demand Rudy Vallee adopted Arch as his protégé.

For two years Arch wrote such LIGHTS OUTs as: "Glacier Woman", "Black Zombie", "Death Pits", "The Dark", "Murder Castle" based on fact, "Chicken Heart", "Cat Wife", and "Dark Letter". Starting March 23, 1938 and ending April 13, 1938, Boris Karloff starred in Arch's LIGHTS OUT plays. Karloff was the first actor to play the husband of the neurotic wife in "Cat Wife". Arch also wrote more sketches such as the controversial play "Adam and Eve" with May West. But he seemed to be writing at the speed of the "Sorcerer's Apprentice" broom. For YOUR HOLLYWOOD PARADE, Arch wrote such stories as "Papa Jonathon" starring Richard Arlen and Mary Astor (January 26, 1938) and "Happy Year" starring Bette Davis (February 9, 1938).

The Arch Oboler method of writing was one of the most unique in RADIO history. Arch would see something or hear something that would give him the idea for a story. Time would pass—sometimes weeks—while Arch let the idea ferment into a complete story. About three weeks before the story would go on the air, he would write the story down in the form of a rough draft. Then he would dictate the story to a recording machine the way it would be heard on the air. When he heard the story he would know how to change it to give the effect he wanted. The whole process of writing the story took only two days on the average.

With one of his recorded stories on disk and a portable disk player under his arm, Arch fought the 1939 traffic of New York until he had arrived at the offices of Lewis Titterton, NBC script chief. With the air of one who had just outwrote the greatest American novelist, Arch played "The Ugliest Man in the World" for Titterton. At once Arch Oboler had made the climb from Chicago NBC to New York network NBC.

ARCH OBOLER'S PLAYS hit RADIO like a two ton truck out of control. Movie stars asked Arch to let them appear in one of his plays for the union minimum, \$21. The stars were eclipsed by the brilliance of the plays themselves, such plays as: "The Ugliest Man in the World" (March 25, 1939); "The Cliff" (April 29, 1939); "Visitor from Hades" (July 1, 1939); "The Ivory Tower" (July 8, 1939 and March 23, 1940); "This Lonely Heart" (August 26, 1939); "Profite Unlimited" (October 28, 1939); Bathysphere (September 18, 1939); and "This Precious Freedom" (December 30, 1939).

At \$4,000 a week, Arch found he had nearly everything he wanted. He had his own show that he not only wrote but also directed. He had fame that grew with ever show. But he was missing one thing, a real meaning to his work.

One of Arch's greatest triumphs came when he received a call from Alla Nazimova, one of the greatest of the theatre. She wanted to do a RADIO show, her first! And she wanted it to be written and directed by Arch Oboler, and no substitutes. ARCH OBOLER'S PLAYS was moved from 10:00 PM EST to 9:30 PM EST on July 8, 1939. That same night Arch Oboler presented Alla Nazimova in the now legionary "The Ivory Tower."

Arch entered the studio and leaped to a table placed in front of the control room window. Placing earphones on his head, Arch stood watching the slim actress take her place at the mike. Nazimova was sixty years old, but she didn't look a day over forty. With a wave of Arch's arms the show was on the air. Another wave and Nazimova lifted her script in her right hand, her left hand rose to her shoulder with her fingers bent and her forefinger touching her thumb lightly, oh, so lightly. And in Arch's headphones the story was wove. The story of a German schoolteacher who finally realized, in the face of Nazi horrors, that she must speak the truth, even though the consequences may be fatal for her. When the show was over all NBC knew Arch Oboler and Alla Nazimova had made RADIO history.

When Nazimova was asked how she felt playing a part without seeing her audience she answered, "I liked it. Always, I have hated audiences. Always!"

On August 26, 1939 NBC was handed over to the team of Oboler and Nazimova. Arch's half hour show was increased to one hour and the full NBC symphony orchestra was put in Arch Oboler's hands for the special hour show, "This Lonely Heart". Nazimova played Mme von Meck, Tschaikowsky's ever-loving patroness, while the NBC symphony orchestra played Tschaikowsky's music (the first time the NBC symphony orchestra had been used for a dramatic show). "This Lonely Heart" was a dramatic and literary high for RADIO and few hour presentations would ever equal it.

On March 23, 1940 at 8:00 PM EST "The Ivory Tower" was repeated and ARCH OBOLER'S PLAYS left the air. After hearing the first performance of "The Ivory Tower" MGM had given Arch a contract to do three movie scripts. The first was "Escape", an anti-Nazi story. Arch would sign the contract only if Alla Nazimova were given a leading role. There as no argument. Anyone who had heard Nazimova on RADIO knew she still had it.

Arch made "Escape" but he learned in doing it that he was an outsider in the conventional world of movie making. Arch's big problem was that he had his own ideas how the movie should be made. He would badger the director, Mervyn Le Roy, about movie studio techniques. Le Roy viewed Arch as a little man with a big mouth. Finally, Le Roy had had enough. In a matter-of-fact tone of voice Le Roy asked Arch to look through a camera finder while Le Roy had the storm scene demonstrated. As soon as Arch's eyes were fixed to the finder, Le Roy cued technicians to drench Arch with cinema rain. A joke the little giant never fully forgave.

Arch liked California so much he commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to build him a home overlooking the Pacific. The house was built on 25-acres of mountaintop in the Santa Monica Mountains. It was unbelievable sight. The house even had a stream running through the living room! Arch called his home "Aeire".

Back in RADIOland Arch was trying to produce a program with meaning. He

turned down a \$52,000 contract and started writing programs that were government-endorsed. A year before Pearl Harbor Arch was writing-directing the series THIS FREEDOM. THIS FREEDOM repeated some of the ARCH OBOLER'S PLAYS:

"And Adam Best" a fantasy of time turned back and three civilized people confronted by a Neanderthal man.

"Genghis Khan" the tale of a Harlem Negro run amok with a spirit at his side.

"This Precious Freedom" a smashing version of the New Order in any American city.

Other shows were:

"Special to Hollywood" another time-fantasy.

"Point of a Gun" a seven minute primer lesson in Nazi business methods.

"An American is Born" a tender, moving story about a woman who crept across the Mexican border into America, so that her child would be born in America. This show turned out to be another victory for Arch Oboler. Elisabeth Bergner, another famed actress who had never been on RADIO, asked Arch to let her play the part. He did. When Arch was asked why so many great people of the theatre flocked to him to be placed on RADIO Arch replied, "They realize I have a respect for the medium I am working in."

Arch wanted to speak out with both barrels against Germany and Japan, but NBC said "NO!" and he had no choice but to obey. Then came Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, and Arch was at once freed to say what he felt should be said. And what did Arch feel should be said? At the Institute for Education by RADIO [1942, Columbus, Ohio] Arch answered the question in part when he said, "Anger is what the people want, and they want hate, the hate of a determined people who are going to kill.... The public says: make us angry. We like it."

Arch did just that. On February 1, 1942 he started his new series, PLAYS FOR AMERICANS. His first program was "Johnny Quinn, U.S.N. and starred Olivia de Haveland. "Johnny Quinn, U.S.N." told of a "main chance" boy who woke up—and died a Pearl Harbor.

PLAYS FOR AMERICANS was dedicated to "people of good-will everywhere." But it was the work of an angry man writing for angry men. The second show was "Paul Revereski" with T. Cook. This was the tale of a lad whose pure patriotism worked sundry changes in his elders [February 8, 1942]. The series was carried on NBC every Sunday at 4:30 PM EWT until April 5 when it was changed to 5:30 PM EWT.

The third show was "Memo to Berchtgesgaden" with Raymond Massey. This was a some what funny story of a German agent that was baffled by the Yankee mind.

The forth PLAYS FOR AMERICANS was "Ghost Story" with E. Lewis. This was one of the all time great masterpieces of hate literature. It was a story that was recounted by "a guy earning his living with his hands." This story brought into sharp and agonizing focus the tragedy of Europe as told by its murdered dead.

The series went on with: James Stewart in "A Letter at Midnight"; Rosemarie de Camp in "Miracle in 3-B"; Bette Davis in "Soliloquy with Death" and "Adolf and Mrs. Runyon"; Dick Powell in "Blood Story"; Mercedes McCambridge [lifetime member of the Texas Radio Historical Society] in "S. S. Ugly Duck" and "Gangster in the House"; Robert Taylor in "Bomber to Tokyo"; and Joan Blondell in "Chicago, Germany".

PLAYS FOR AMERICANS ended July 5, 1942 with the repeat of "Johnny Quinn, U.S.N." its first show. Arch was not only out of a series but out of money as well. He had very little choice but to go back to writing for money. On October 6, 1942 CBS revised LIGHTS OUT on Tuesday at 8:00 PM EWT and it ran until September 28, 1943. But Arch was not about to let a little thing like the need for money stop him from writing the plays he felt had meaning. On October 18, 1942 at 12:30 PM EST on NBC every Sunday Arch started TO BE PRESIDENT, a fictional report to the President on the

state of the nation. The series talked about the average American. It was much less dramatic than PLAYS FOR AMERICANS, but it was deeply moving. The first story traced the life of a boy who went away to die in the Pacific.

TO BE PRESIDENT went on until December 20, 1942. On February 21, 1943 Arch started what was to be one of his best remembered war time series, the FREE WORLD THEATER. Even though Arch directed and produced the FREE WORLD THEATER he did not write all the plays. He did, however, write the first, "The People March" with Alla Nazimova and Vonrad Veidt. "The People March" was based on Vice President Henry A. Wallace's "Centure of the Common Man."

In the weeks to come such stars as: Dinah Shore, Harry Carey, Claudette Colbert, Lee J. Cobb, Chester Morris, Joseph Cotton, Jackie Cooper, Edward Arnold, and Charles Coburn would play in such shows as: "White House Kitchen", "China to America", "Last Will and Testament of John Smith", "Something About Joe", "General Armchair", and "In Memory of a Hero". His last FREE WORLD THEATER presentation was "V Day", on June 27, 1943.

On January 18, 1944 Arch Oboler started his last big war series, EVERYTHING FOR THE BOYS [NBC, Tuesday, 7:30 PM EWT]. The light of hate was dimming. From January 18 until June 13, 1944 the shows were dramas starring Ronald Coleman and other great actors and actresses. The stories were mostly adaptations of classical stories. Among the stars were: Mercedes McCambridge, Ginger Rogers, Irene Dunne, Greer Garson, Bob Burns, Merle Oberon, Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, Barbara Stanwyck, Ingrid Bergman, Loretta Young, and Olivia de Havilland.

EVERYTHING FOR THE BOYS was pre-empted on "D" Day, June 6, 1944 and lasted only one more week as a drama show. Ronald Coleman stayed on for the June 20 show, but left because it was no longer a dramatic show. The series lived on from June 27, 1944 until June 25, 1945 with Dick Haymes, but its last year was without dramas and meaning.

During June of 1944 Arch Oboler joined William N. Robson of SUSPENSE fame to write four plays for the Treasury Department. The first, but Arch, was "Surrender" with Franchot Tone and Hans Conried. It was the tale of two soldiers, one American and one German, through the dramatic situation of prisoner and captor, tell the story of conditional surrender and the terrible warping of the young German mind.

The second play, but Robson, was "High Command" with Paul Lukas, Walter Slezak, and Eric von Stroheim. In it the German High Command plans for a third world war.

The third play, by Arch, was "I Want to Go Back" with Fred MacMurray and Olivia de Havilland. It tells of an American soldier who after a 12-hour leave finds that truth is more often found in the realities of the battlefield than the homefront.

The fourth and last play, by Robson, was "E Day" and it evaluated the American homefront sacrifices after Pearl Harbor.

The man who some people had stood and waited to get a good look at was seen less and less around RADIO City and NBC. The light was about out. Mutual revised the ARCH OBOLER'S PLAYS on Thursday at 10:00 PM EST from April 5, 1945 to October 11, 1945. But this time the series would end after only 26 dramas had been aired, compared to the 72 dramas of the '39-'40 series.

NBC tested LIGHTS OUT under the title of FANTASIES FROM LIGHTS OUT starting July 14, 1945 and ending September 1, 1945 [Saturday, 10:00 PM EST]. The summer trial was a mild success so NBC considered LIGHTS OUT as a possible series if ever they should need to fill some air time. On July 6, 1946 NBC put LIGHTS OUT on the air again [Saturday, 10:00 PM EST], but it failed so that it was taken off the air on August 24, 1946 after eight shows.

In 1964 NBC revived ARCH OBOLER'S PLAYS and they ran until 1965. In 1970 LIGHTS OUT was revived under the title of THE DEVIL AND MR. O and it lasted until 1971.

The light only flickered.

Arch Oboler produced the first feature-length 3-dimension color film, "Bwana Devil". The AFL Projectionists Union went into dispute over wages because it was so much harder to show a 3-D movie, and Arch's partners in Gulu Pictures sued for \$3.5 million.

Arch Oboler did not let his set-backs of 1953 stop him. In 1956 he wrote a Broadway play called "Night of the Auk". Three of his half hour RADIO plays were equivalent to one Broadway play.

It is hard to think about RADIO without thinking about Arch Oboler. He was a man who gave the impression that he was from another world far beyond the stars, but who wrote like an American from Chacago. When the dictionary of RADIO history is written one of the entries should read something like this: OBOLER. A writer who is a great RADIO playwright. A writer with meaning. The creator of images in the human mind.

ARCH OBOLER'S VIEW OF RADIO:

"It is wrong to believe that RADIO plays must be 'written down' to be enjoyed by the masses. It is surprising how listeners understand the subtleties; there is no need to draw diagrams. The trick is to stay within the realm of life's experiences which the listeners understand. And don't forget a good idea can be exciting without slam-bang. Always the emphasis must be on the idea; not necessarily on dialogue or sound effects. Often silence or a pause between words is more important than the spoken word, because the listener, in the mind's eye, during the pause, is contributing to the play. His imagination gets a chance to work; he is experiencing the play more emotionally.

"It is a grave error in RADIO to let the framework of the program—I mean the announcements and comments of a narrator—get in the way of the play. Blah ruins the emotional flow. Jack Benny and Fred Allen know how to get a commercial plug into comedy, but the commercials in a drama should be at the opening and at the close; they should never interrupt the play. Always the story must be tied up with the listener; mere excitement is not enough. The play must run smooth. That is impossible if the announcer interrupts the show and destroys the scenery and illusion built up in the listener's imagination."

"To say that the dramatized war program, one with an exhortatory inspirational theme, can reach a saturation point whereas the informational one is not likely to is, first, to presuppose that the listener exposes himself to a continual barrage of emotional drama of similar context and effectiveness (which, of course, is patently untrue) and secondly, to deny the record of the past."

"Good solid facts can be used to erect a base for understanding—but it must be the occasional and thoughtful dramatization of those problems which will reach most effectively into the viscera of a public which, by and large, thinks with its emotions."

"The result of RADIO's haste is that the average play is hackneyed. It is not a clam, thoughtful approach, as in the theatre. RADIO is too typed. Actors should study their parts far in advance, the same as in the theatre. That would be an intellectual rather than a speed approach to RADIO acting. A star RADIO actor should live the part, especially in the more serious drama. Of course, that's impossible in the daytime serials."

Sturat Metz, the announcer for PEPPER YOUNG'S FAMILY disagreed in print to Arch's statement, "A star RADIO actor should live the part, especially in the more serious drama. Of course, that's impossible in the daytime serials."

When Arch Oboler was asked who were the best star actors he had directed he started by explaining that he believed actors should spend a lot of time working on their lines before going on the air. To Arch Bette Davis and Boris Karloff were the best movie stars he had directed on RADIO because they worked hard to

learn their lines. Of the RADIO, Arch picked Orson Welles as one of the best because he "is gifted by the gods in voice, energy.... and intelligence." Other RADIO actors Arch picked were Raymond Johnson and Ray Collins of New York, Betty Winkler of Chicago, and Edmond Mc Donald of the West Coast. And, of course, he picked Alla Nazimova as the best of the legitimate theatre whom he had directed on RADIO.

ARCH OBOLER TELLS HOW TO WRITE

A RADIO PLAY

THE STORY:

"The very first premise for writing good RADIO should be actually having something to say that hasn't been said before quite in the manner in which you say it!"

THE STORYLINE:

"The tight, well thought-out synopsis generally results in a tight, well thought-out play."

THE BEGINNING:

"RADIO has copied from many other literary mediums [,] ... but of itself it has the need for a running start."

The broadcast playwright "must catch his audience at once or the dial begin to twist...."

"... In the first few moments of dialogue and plot action, of material which makes the casual listener think, 'This promises to be good. Guess I'll stay with it a while.'"

"To illustrate specifically, supposeing we start writing a story together. ... a woman meeting with the other woman in her husband's life. ... The silent partner thinks, 'Well, why not have the announcer say: 'And now we bring you a story of passion, the strange tale of two women who love the same man, and who now meet, for the first time, to discuss their twisted lives.' ... Why not, Silent collaborator? Because that's lazy writing, making someone outside of one's story set the scene.... Let's start again and try to be more honest craftsmen."

"ANNOUNCER: The scene, a room in a second-rate hotel. Two women sit facing each other; one of them is dressed in an expensive fur coat; the other's dress is as poor as the furnishings of the room. The woman in the fur coat speaks.

"THE WIFE: [TENSELY] You're a fool! Just a fool!

"THE WOMAN: [QUIETLY] Am I?

"THE WIFE: You knew I was coming here and yet you did nothing to stop me.

"THE WOMAN: [VERY SIMPLY, QUIETLY] Why should I? He's dead....

"Now let them tune out!"

"I once spoke along these lines to an aspiring author. ... He then proceeded to turn in the following script beginning:

"DAUGHTER: Oh, Mother, I think I ought to get married.

"MOTHER: Why, my dear?

"DAUGHTER: I think I'm going to have a baby!

"Below this he triumphantly wrote, 'Can you think of a more attention-getting opening?'"

THE FORM:

"The form of the RADIO drama cannot be determined by anything but sheer experience of writing, and—the sheer experience of listening. ... Techniques plucked out of a textbook MAY fit the idea of the play, but the truly integrated drama is one which results from the use of a form and a technique which are organically part of the drama."

THE DIALOGUE:

"The particularities of one's dialogue obviously are dependent upon one's story, one's Muse, and the specific inspiration one uses."

"By and large, RADIO over-dialogues. Characters say too much. ... Listening to and writing for RADIO, one learns that which is unspoken BEHIND the scene or situation becomes tremendously effective, for the listener, in his mind, puts into the play and into the situation that which the playwright has artfully implied."

"The difference between good writing and great writing, many times, is in what the craftsman suggests and implies, but doesn't write."

THE SOUND:

"Every RADIO playwright would do well, also, to provide himself with a small aged man, about three inches in height, to sit on the top of each page of script, stroke his long, gray beard, and moan: 'With moderation! With moderation!'"

"The moment a sound effect gets in the way of the story, the moment a sound effect is used, not as an integral part of the play, but as something important within itself, it should be deleted."

"'Moderation! Moderation!' cries the little old man. 'Less of sound and fury and perhaps what you say may signify something....'"

THE MUSIC:

Arch Oboler wrote many of his best RADIO plays while listening to the music of the classics. Music was very important to Arch. And it reflected in what he said about the use of music in playwrighting.

"Music in RADIO serves a three-fold purpose, aside from keeping the Musicians' Union solvent; it can serve as a transitional device between scenes, as background mood music, and as an effect to heighten emotional impact."

"It is not at all vital to know the exact musical number needed; a simple indication of this sort can turn the trick:

"TRANSITION MUSIC: [SOMETHING WITH QUIET FOREBODING, SEA MOTIF]"

"The writer should indicate wherever possible the sort of music he would like as a background to the particular scene—IF the emotional effect can be heightened by the use of music."

"...reinforce the emotion of the scene by giving not the actual ... [sound], but an impressionistic one illustrating the turmoil of an overwrought mind."

THE PRODUCTION:

"Sound, music, dialogue, and of these dialogue leads all the rest—IN THEORY.

"A tour of the dial explains that emphasis of 'in theory.' The actors are speaking, and it is supposedly raining gently, and in the background the music is presumably weaving a mood of unrequited love. But the orchestra leader is a rugged individualist, so the music doesn't weave. It pours—over and around and through the dialogue, covering it completely.

"The sound department, meanwhile, is standing upon its own rights, and so a Niagara of rain is wiping out the last vestiges of the author's words.

"Ah, yes—dialogue leads all the rest—IF it can be heard."

"When a character is to speak quietly, so indicate before the speech.

"Where music is to fade-in and then stay far back behind the following dialogue, indicate it in just those words."

"Where a sound effect is to continue behind a scene, mark 'continuing BEHIND scene, FAR back' so that there will be no mistakes as to what is to predominate."

"I have a larger audience now than Shakespeare ever had."
ARCH OBOLER, 1940

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"Lr on Planned Broadcasts" Je 11, II, 5:1
- 1945 "Tribute to FDR" 1r Ap. 17, 22: 6
- 1952 "A Oboler plans 1st Feature-Length 3-dimension Color Film"
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- 1953 "Bwana Devil" Ja 17, 12:1; Ja 18, 81:1; F 10, 24:8; rev, F 19,
20:5; comment, F 22, II, 1:8

BOOKS:

ADVENTURE IN RADIO; EVERYTHING HAPPENED TO HIM; FOURTEEN RADIO PLAYS;
FREE WORLD THEATRE; NIGHT OF THE AUK; OBOLER OMNIBUS; PLAYS FOR
AMERICANS; THIS FREEDOM

OTHERS:

Various tapes and notes.

I DO (A RADIO Script)*

By Arch Oboler

ANNOUNCER: The scene—an automobile moving swiftly along; at the wheel, a tall young man by the name of William Brown..... There is a gleam in Mr. Brown's eyes, and a nervous song on his lips, for Mr. Brown is on his way to keep a rendezvous with a license, a preacher, and a certain young lady....

SOUND: [MUSIC: IMPRESSIONISTIC MUSIC OF "WEDDING MARCH", SEQUE INTO EFFECT OF: SOUND OF AUTOMOBILE MOVING ALONG....THIS EFFECT DOWN AND CONTINUING FAR, FAR BACK BEHIND...]

BILL: [HE IS "DA-DA DUMMING" THE "WEDDING MARCH" TO HIMSELF—BREAKS OFF WITH:] Do you, William K. Brown, take this woman to be your lawful wedded wife, to love, honor, and so forth? [TRIES VARIOUS INFLECTIONS] I do....I do....I do! [SIGHS]...[BEGINS TO "DA-DE-DUM" "WEDDING MARCH" AGAIN, BREAKING OFF AFTER A FEW SECONDS WITH:] Are you nervous, Mr. Brown? No, Mr. Brown isn't nervous! Mr. Brown is a man of iron and steel..... Mr. Brown isn't nervous—the only reason he's got this empty feeling inside is because—because [CHUCKLES] he's....nervous!

SOUND: [SOUND OF AN AUTO UP A LITTLE]

SOUND: [BABY CRIES, BACK]

BILL: What -n the....

SOUND: [SOUND OF AUTOMOBILE COMING TO SUDDEN STOP—SQUEAL OF BRAKES]

SOUND: [BABY CRIES AGAIN, BACK]

BILL: [AGHAST] HOLY SUFFERIN' CODFISH!

SOUND: [BABY CRIES AGAIN, BACK]

BILL: Where in the world did THAT thing come from?

SOUND: [BABY WHIMPERS AGAIN, BACK]

BILL: [TRYING TO REASSURE HIMSELF] Gosh, one of us is in the wrong car.....

SOUND: [BABY BEGINS TO CRY LOUDER]

BILL: I tell you don't—there's—there's nothing to cry....Hey, you'll fall off that seat! [WITH EFFORT AS HE REACHES ACROSS TO BACK SEAT AND GETS CHILD] All right, all right, come on up here!

SOUND: [FADE-IN BABY'S CRYING FULL TO GIVE IMPRESSION OF BABY BEING LIFTED INTO FRONT SEAT]

BILL: A baby! In my car! [WOEFULLY] Why does everything happen to me? Do you—do you bite?

SOUND: [BABY CRIES AGAIN]

BILL: All right now—take it easy! I didn't mean anything by that—Gosh—I never handled one of you things before! Which end goes up?

SOUND: [BABY STOPS CRYING AND BEGINS TO GURGLE DELIGHTEDLY]

BILL: Those blankets—here, let me look at you?

SOUND: [BABY GURGLES A LITTLE LOUDER]

BILL: Say, you're not a very big one, are you? You couldn't have crawled in there, now could you?

SOUND: [BABY GURGLES]

BILL: [AS IF ANSWERING BABY] No, I don't think you could—You're a brand new model, aren't you? I mean—oh, I don't know what I mean! I—I never had a baby before!

SOUND: [BABY COOS]

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BILL: Well, what're you grinning about? This is a heck of a spot to be in! I'm on my way to get married!

SOUND: [Baby gurgles]

BILL: Yeah, I said married! And now I've got you on my hands! And if I'm late to my own wedding—hey, wait a minute! I got it! It's that smart-aleck best-man of mine—this has got all the earmarks of that corkscrew mind of his!

SOUND: [BABY STARTS TO CRY SOFTLY]

BILL: Now wait a minute—don't kick those blankets off! I won't know how to put them back on! What's this—pinned to your—Hold still, will you? I've got to read it! [READS]

SOUND: [BABY CRIES—DIE OUT BEHIND]

BILL: [READS] "Dear Friend: I am putting my baby in your care because I think that anyone who can afford such an expensive automobile could afford maybe to take care of just one little baby. Her name is Sally and she is a very good baby, but her father has gone away and I am going with him, so please be good to her and please, please don't give her to an orphanage. God bless you."

SOUND: [BABY GURGLES SLEEPILY]

BILL: [SLOWLY] Her name is Sally....My mother's name....[SHARPLY TO HIDE HIS FEELINGS] Well, what if it is? What can I do with a baby? I'm not even MARRIED yet!

SOUND: [BABY GURGLES]

BILL: No, I'm not trying to give you a line! They're waiting for me at the church right now! Listen, fella—I mean Sally—orphan homes aren't so bad. Why, look at the size of me—and I was brought up in one!

SOUND: [BABY COOS]

BILL: Yeah, honest I was! 'Course it gets kind of lonely sometimes—I mean around the holidays—you know, Christmas—you see Christmas trees in other kids' windows and you start to thinking—[BREAKS OFF ANGRILY] Say—what's the matter with me? Ann waiting for me at the church and here I am playing "Hearts and Flowers!"

SOUND: [BABY ON VERGE OF TEARS]

BILL: Aw, now—now, Sally, I wasn't yelling at you—only at myself!

SOUND: [BABY WHIMPERS APPEALINGLY]

BILL: Now please don't talk like that—I can't think straight when you do! And I've got to figure out what to do with you, now don't I?

SOUND: [BABY GURGLES]

BILL: Yeah, sure, I know she said not to give you to an orphanage [DEFENSIVELY] but what else can I do, Sally? You're such a tiny little thing and I'm such a big awkward galoot—why, you fit right in the palm of my hand! I mean.....

SOUND: [BABY COOS]

BILL: [SLOWLY] I mean—[SOFTLY—APPEALINGLY] What do you wanna hold on to my hand like that for? Be reasonable, kid—how can a guy like me take care of a little bit of something like you?

SOUND: [BABY GURGLES AS IF TALKING]

BILL: Yeah, I know I'm going to get married, and Ann—well, she's as good a sport as there is, but—but after all, good sport or not, be reasonable, Sally! Would any girl want to take a baby along on a honeymoon?

SOUND: [BABY GURGLES AGAIN AS IF TALKING]

BILL: All right—if that's what you want—but—but—how'll I tell her? Suppose she doesn't want a baby—Holy smoke! What if she doesn't want a baby?

SOUND: [SOUND OF OPENING AUTO DOOR]

BILL: I've got to telephone her! There—that store! Mebbe they got a telephone there!

SOUND: [OPENING DOOR—SHOP-BELL TINKLES—CLOSING DOOR]
 OLD MAN: [FADE-IN] Could I help you, sir?
 BILL: Sorry to bother you, but—but have you a telephone I could use?
 OLD MAN: Yes, help yourself! Right there against the wall.
 SOUND: [BABY COOS]
 BILL: Thanks!
 SOUND: [SOUND OF NICKEL DROPPING INTO SLOT—DIALING SOUND]
 BILL: [THROUGH DIALING—NERVOUSLY] Does she like kids? Doesn't she? Oh,
 why didn't I ever ask her—
 SOUND: [BABY GURGLES BEHIND ABOVE]
 BILL: [SOTTO] Hello, hello? Is this the church? Listen—would you please
 call Ann Cunningham to the telephone? Yeah....I know she's getting
 married, but get her to the telephone anyway! But I tell you she's
 GOT to come to the telephone! This is Bill Brown! Yeah, THAT Bill
 Brown! Hurry!
 SOUND: [BABY GURGLES]
 BILL: Now take it easy, Sally—hello—hello—Ann? It's Bill! No—no,
 wait, Ann—listen to me! I haven't had a chance to mention this
 before—but kids—how do you feel about kids? [UP IN GREAT EXCITEMENT]
 That's SWELL! WHY?
 SOUND: [BABY COOS IN CLOSE]
 BILL: Well, you see, Ann—you—me—[UP] WE JUST HAD A BABY!
 SOUND: [MUSICAL CURTAIN—"ROCK-A-BYE BABY"]

STAY TUNED TO RADIO IN DEPTH FOR MORE

OF ARCH OBOLER

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

ISSUE 10 OF RADIO IN DEPTH WILL CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING LOGS BY

RAY STANICH

- + ARCH OBOLER PLAYS 3/25/39-3/23/40 and 4/5/45-10/11/45
- + EVERYMAN'S THEATER 10/4/40-3/28/41
- + PLAYS FOR AMERICANS 2/1/42-7/5/42
- + LIGHTS OUT 9/29/37-4/20/39; 10/6/42-9/28/43; 7/6/46-8/24/46;
and 7/16/47-8/6/47
- + TO BE PRESIDENT 10/18/42-12/20/42
- + FREE WORLD THEATER 2/21/43-6/27/43
- + EVERYTHING FOR THE BOYS 1/18/44-6/13/44
- + FANTESIES FROM LIGHTS OUT 7/14/45-9/1/45

THE JACK BENNY LOG PART VI

The JACK BENNY LOG for this month covers the years 1942 and 1943. For the years 1935 and 1941 see Issue 8, Page 7. For the years 1936 and 1940 see Issue 7, Page 6. For the years 1937 and 1939 see Issue 6, Page 3. For the year 1938 see Issue 4, Page 7.

SPONSOR: Jell-o; from 10/4/42 Grapenuts
NETWORK: NBC

DAY: Sunday

TIME: 7:00 PM EWT

THE REGULARS:

Jack Benny, Mary Livingstone,
Don Wilson, Phil Harris,
Dennis Day, and Eddie Anderson.

1942

- Jan. 4: Jack gives a New Year Eve party.
- Jan. 11: Jack and gang are at the Army Air Corps base at March Field, California. Dennis sings "We Did It Before, and We Can Do It Again."
- Jan. 18: Jack presents "They Died With Their Boots On."
- Jan. 25: Jack presents "The Fightwig Murder Case" or "We Done It—and We're Glad" written by Jack, Bill Morrow, and Ed Beloin.
- Feb. 1: Chapter 2 of "The Fightwig Murder Case."
- Feb. 8: Chapter 3 of "The Fightwig Murder Case."
- Feb. 15: Jack celebrates his birthday a day late.
- Feb. 22: Jack's show comes from the Presidio in San Francisco.
- Mar. 1: Jack starts a late campaign for an Oscar—any Oscar.
- Mar. 8: Jack is entertaining the Marines at San Diego with his guest, Joan Bennett. The gang present "Hamlet" and Mary reads another of her poems.
- Mar. 15: Jack talks golf.
- Mar. 22: Jack plants a victory garden and has trouble telling Phil how to do it.

- Mar. 29: Jack presents the "Benny Minstrel Show." Jack and Don sing, "Asleep in the Deep."
- Apr. 5: Rochester shows up in Studio B wearing in an out of sight Easter outfit. Jack and the gang have an Easter hunt.
- Apr. 12: Jack is at Camp Haan, California.
- Apr. 19: Jack introduces Percy Kilbride, who has a singsong voice. The gang is getting ready to go to San Francisco for the opening of the new NBC studios.
- Apr. 26: Jack starts the celebrations of the opening of the new NBC studios in San Francisco. The JACK BENNY SHOW runs two minutes over. ONE MAN'S FAMILY was the first dramatic show to be broadcasted from the new studios.
- May 3: Jack and gang are back in Hollywood.
- May 10: Jack and gang are at Mather Field. They were the first big name people in RADIO to go to Mather Field, California.
- May 17: ?
- May 24: Jack is at Camp Callen at La Jolla, California.
- May 31: The last show of the season and the last show for Jell-o. Jack stays in Hollywood to finish "George Washington Slept Here."
- Oct. 4: First show of the new season. Jack takes the Maxwell and rounds up his gang. Jack has a new engineer, production director, and sound effects man. Dennis sings "Be Careful, It's My Heart."
- Oct. 11: Barbara Stanwyck joins Jack and together they perform for the fliers at the West Coast Army Air Force Training Center in Santa Ana, California.
- Oct. 18: Jack bids farewell to his faithful old Maxwell and donates it to the national scrap salvage drive.
- Oct. 25: Jack and gang are in Hollywood. Jack is looking for a horse and wicker surrey to replace the Maxwell.

- Nov. 1: Jack is at Camp Elliot near San Diego entertaining the marines.
- Nov. 8: Sam "Schlepperman" Hearn is visiting Jack's show. Jack digs in his back yard for oil in hopes of paying off Dennis' salary claims.
- Nov. 15: Jack is at the Terminal Island Naval Air Base near San Diego.
- Nov. 22: Jack hitches up Leona, the horse, to his buggy and rides to the opening of his newest picture, "George Washington Slept Here." Dennis sings, for the first time on the air, "Three Dreams."
- Nov. 29: Jack is in Palm Springs, California entertaining the troops.
- Dec. 6: Jack and gang do his version of "Gentleman Jim."
- Dec. 13: Jack is at the Vanderbilt Theater in New York. Gary Cooper is Jack's guest and only men in uniforms are let into the theater to see the broadcast. Phil Harris is in the U. S. Maritime Service so Benny Goodman fills in for Phil.
- Dec. 20: Jack and gang are at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. They try to find a farm house where George Washington might have slept (a plug for his movie). Benny Goodman was unable to join them.
- Dec. 27: Fred Allen is Jack's guest on the 6th anniversary of their feud. Fred plays the role of Santa Clause. Fred started the feud during a broadcast where was presenting 10-year old Stuart Kanin, a violinist. Fred remarked "The exhibition should put to shame a certain Sunday night comedian who tries to play the violin." Kanin had been playing "The Bee." Jack's show came from New York City.
- 1943
- Jan. 3: Jack is at an Army Air Base near Bangor, Maine. Abe Lyman and his orchestra with Ruth Blaine go along to give musical support.
- Jan. 10: ?
- Jan. 17: Jack's guest is Oscar Levant. They do a Benny Production of "Misinformation Please." The show is broadcasted from the Vanderbilt Theater in New York.
- Jan. 24: Jack and gang are at Fort Meade, Maryland.
- Jan. 31: Jack is at the U.S. Barracks at Quantico, Virginia. Mary was not on the show because of doctor's orders.
- Feb. 7: Jack's guest is George Jessel and the show is in New York City.
- Feb. 14: Jack is broadcasting from Canada.
- Feb. 21: Jack is in Chicago. Bob Crosby and his orchestra provided the background music.
- Feb. 28: Jack is at Fort Custer near Battle Creek, Michigan with Bob Crosby and his orchestra.
- Mar. 7: Jack became ill and they had to replace his show with "They Loved Me in St. Joe."
- Mar. 14: Jack was too ill to travel so Mary and Jack remained in Chicago while the rest of the gang joined Orson Welles in Hollywood for the show.
- Mar. 21: Orson Welles is replacing Jack. Mary and Phil rejoin the show.
- Mar. 28: Orson Welles is replacing Jack.
- Apr. 4: Orson Welles is replacing Jack.
- Apr. 11: Jack returns to the show. The show is still in Hollywood.
- Apr. 18: ?
- Apr. 25: ?
- May 2: Jack's guest is Eddie Cantor.
- May 9: Dennis sings "Mother of Mine."
- May 16: Jack is at the Marine Training Station at Camp Pendleton, California.
- May 23: ?
- May 30: Final show of the season. Deanna Durbin is guest. Deanna with Phil's help sings, "Say a Prayer for the Boys Over There."
- Oct. 10: First show of the season. In New York City at Vanderbilt Theater Buck Benny Back.
- Oct. 17: Jack tells about his summer trip overseas to entertain the troops. He went to places like Algiers

- and Casablanca. Minerva Pious was on the show.
- Oct. 24: Jack presents his version of "Algiers." Minerva Pious plays Sadie Lamar.
- Oct. 31: Jack prtends he is taking a trip to Brazil. Dennis sings "Brazil."
- Nov. 7: Jack is at the Marine Corps Air Station at Mojave, California. Dennis sings "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning."
- Nov. 14: Jack does a wild west drama. He is in Palm Springs, California playing for the Torney Hospital and the Twenty-First Air Force Command.
- Nov. 21: Jack dreams he is a Thanksgiving turkey. Dennis sings "How Sweet You Are."
- Nov. 28: Jack tries to stop the fighting between Rochester and Jack's boarder, Mr. Billingsly. Then he finds he has another fight on his hands: Mary and the maid, who is Rochester's niece.
- Dec. 5: ?
- Dec. 12: Jack is at the California Army Air Base at Murcoo Dry Lake, California.
- Dec. 19: ?
- Dec. 26: ?

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